

**City of Reading City Council
Regular Business Meeting
Monday, July 8, 2013**

Council President Francis G. Acosta called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by Pastor Dewayne Messenger of All Soul's Church.

All present pledged to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Council President Acosta
Councilor Corcoran, District 1
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2
Councilor Sterner, District 3
Councilor Marmarou, District 4
Councilor Reed, District 5
Councilor Waltman, District 6
City Auditor D. Cituk
City Solicitor C. Younger
Managing Director C. Snyder
City Clerk L. Kelleher
Mayor V. Spencer

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Council Commendation celebrating Recreation Month, accepted by the Reading Recreation Commission
- Mayoral Proclamation for East Reading Boxing Club, accepted by Andres Acuna
- Mayoral Proclamation for King's Gym, accepted by Marshall Kauffman

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Acosta announced that three (3) citizens were registered to address Council on non-agenda matters and one (1) citizen was registered to address Council on agenda matters. He inquired if any Councilor objected to suspending the rule requiring non-agenda comment at the end of the Council meeting. As no one objected, the rule to require non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting was suspended. Council President Acosta reminded the citizens registered to speak about the remaining public speaking rules.

Mayor Vaughn Spencer, of Douglass St, declined when called to the podium.

Ed Ott, of Muhlenberg St, stated that he attended a Council meeting about a year ago to

complain about 1422 Muhlenberg Street. He stated that this property is currently a fire damaged shell. He stated that the property was placed on the Blighted Property list and it is in foreclosure. He stated that the condition of the property is driving property values in the neighborhood down. He also stated that parts of the roofing material are falling off of the house and causing safety issues in the neighborhood.

Charles Buckingham, of Washington St, was not present.

Gary Fitzsimmons, of Wyomissing, stated that he is originally from Melbourne Australia, which has neighborhoods similar to Reading. He stated that he has experience buying, rehabbing and flipping properties and he purchased two properties at tax sale to rehab. He described his ongoing problem with property maintenance violations. He stated that some quality of life tickets were successfully appealed. He stated that other violations that he never received have gone to collections. He questioned getting sent to collections when he did not receive the violation.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES

Council President Acosta called Council's attention to the agenda for this meeting, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading, and the minutes for the June 24th Regular Meeting of Council. He noted the need withdraw the Consent Agenda Resolution relating to the Civil Service Board and to add the following legislation to the agenda:

- Consent Agenda Resolution – approving the update to the Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Introduction of New Ordinances – authorizing the Mayor to take steps to acquire properties on Penn Street

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Sterner, to approve the minutes from the June 24th Regular Meeting of Council and the agenda, as amended, including the legislation under the Consent Agenda heading. The motion was approved unanimously.

Consent Agenda

A. Award of Contract - for the renovation of the Pump Tender Room Roof to Purcell Construction, 560 North 5th Street, P.O. Box 188, Denver, PA 17517 who is the low bidder with total bid price of \$35,600.00 (**Purchasing**) – **PAGE 11**

B. Resolution 55-2013 – authorizing the disposition of contracts in the City Clerk's office as listed. (**Council Staff**) **PAGE 13**

C. WITHDRAWN Resolution 56- 2013– authorizing the Administration to take certain actions in compliance with the recent Civil Service Board decision (Managing Director) *To be distributed Monday*

C. Resolution 59-2013 – approving the update to the Hazard Mitigation Plan (EMA Dep Chief)

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Mayor Spencer read the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering in summary:

- His attendance at the PA Municipal League's conference in State College the week of June 25th
- His availability every Tuesday from 1-2 pm for meetings with citizens; appointments can be set through the Mayor's Office staff
- His assistance with citizen issues in the Croyden Terrace area
- Start of a walk-ability audit in middle school and elementary school areas

AUDITOR'S REPORT

City Auditor Cituk read the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering the following:

- 2013 Recycling Grant used to purchase a baler
- Pension Review

REPORT FROM DEPT. DIRECTORS, BOARDS, AUTHORITIES, & COMMISSIONS

David Beane, Chair of the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), stated that as required he is providing an annual report to the members of EAC. He described the mission and activities of the EAC regarding sustainability and environmental issues and legislation. He also described the EAC's work to educate citizens through community workshops and a program on BCTV. He asked City Council to assist in identifying three (3) additional members to serve on the EAC.

Mr. Beane thanked Deputy City Clerk Shelly Katzenmoyer and Utilities Division Manager Deb Hoag for their help and assistance.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked Mr. Beane and the EAC for their report and their continuous work on environmental issues for the City. She also agreed to assist in identifying additional EAC members.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

A. Bill No. 30A-2013 - authorizing the amendment of the Park and Recreation Fees as recommended by the Rec Commission (**Bus Analyst**) (PAGE 79) *Introduced at the 6-24 regular meeting – Advertised July 1, 2013 PAGE 14*

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No.

30A-2013.

Bill No. 30A-2013 was adopted by the following vote:

**Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,
President - 7**

Nays: None - 0

B. Bill No. 31-2013 - authorizing the transfer of \$20,000 from the General Fund Contingency account to a Charter Review Commission line item for support of the Charter Review Commission (Auditor) (PAGE 83) *Introduced at the 6-24 regular meeting PAGE 18*

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Corcoran, to enact Bill No. 30A-2013.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this Bill was discussed in the Committee of the Whole session that precedes the regular meeting and that a reduction in the amount of the allocation was discussed. She expressed the belief that those appointed to the Charter Review Commission, such as herself, Mr. Corcoran and Mr. Cituk, recognize the need to be frugal with the City's money and will take care with the allocation of funds necessary to the Commission's needs and will report back to Council.

Councilor Corcoran stated that originally he supported the reduction; however he agreed that those appointed to the Commission will not spend the money unwisely.

Councilor Reed expressed the belief that the amount of the allocation could be safely reduced to \$15,000 due to the improved use of electronic communications and transmissions. She agreed that those appointed to the Commission will be responsible.

Bill No. 30A-2013 was adopted by the following vote:

**Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,
President - 6**

Nays: Reed - 1

C. Bill No. 32-2013 – amending Chapter 1, Part 7 Fire Escrow Proceeds, of the Codified Ordinances by adding requirements regarding the rehabilitation or demolition of fire damaged properties and renumbering as required (**Fire Escrow Work Group/Council Staff**) (PAGE 86) *Introduced at the 6-24 regular meeting; Advertized July 1, 2013 PAGE 21*

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 32-2013.

Managing Director Snyder explained that this amendment places requirements around fire damaged properties that have fire insurance. She stated that the amendment requires demolition to occur within six months of the fire and rehabilitation within two years of the fire.

Councilor Corcoran stated that the City needs stronger legislation, local and or state, to more effectively deal with all properties damaged by fire, not only properties with fire insurance. Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed.

Bill No. 32-2013 was adopted by the following vote:

Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,
President - 7
Nays: None - 0

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

PENDING

Bill No. -2013 – vacating a portion of Moss Street, as described in Exhibit A and removing this portion of Moss St from the City’s topographical map (**Law**) (PAGE 84) ***Introduced at the 6-24 regular meeting***

Council President Acosta read the following ordinance into the record:

A. Ordinance - authorizing the Mayor to negotiate terms and to execute any and all documents, agreements and papers to convey certain Penn Street properties to the City of Reading. (Law)

RESOLUTIONS

A. Resolution 57-2013 – appointing Thomas Anewalt to the Charter Board (**Nom & Appts**)
PAGE 26

B. Resolution 58-2013 – appointing Thomas Anewalt to the Charter Review Commission
(Council Pres) **PAGE 27**

Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Marmarou, to adopt Resolutions 57 and 58-2013.

Councilor Marmarou described the skills and experience Mr. Anewalt brings to these positions.

Councilors Corcoran, Reed and Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that Mr. Anewalt brings a

wealth of experience, legal and municipal, to these positions.

Resolution No. 57 and 58-2013 were adopted by the following vote:

**Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,
President - 7**

Nays: None - 0

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilor Corcoran stated that properties sold at tax sales often carry delinquent payments from utilities and other fees. He stated that the buyer needs to perform due diligence before purchasing a property at a tax sale.

Councilor Marmarou noted the importance of bringing neighborhood issues to light during Council meetings. He described the successful handling of a speeding problem on Hampden Blvd.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed; however, she noted that some issues are too complex to be handled in an expedient fashion, such as the need for the repaving of Cotton Street.

Councilor Reed noted the partial mowing around the Welcome to Reading sign on the West Shore Bypass. She noted the need to have this entire area mowed.

Councilor Reed asked the Auditor to make monthly reports to the Finance Committee on the money spent by the Charter Review Commission and she noted the need for the Charter Review Commission to use the proper procurement methods. She also suggested that the Administration consider having a citizen Ride-a-long program with Property Maintenance Inspectors. She stated that this will provide citizens with a better understanding of how the violation and quality of life processes work.

Councilor Waltman noted the need for the entrances and exits of the bypass to be mowed. He suggested utilizing RBI to accomplish this task.

Councilor Sterner thanked tonight's speakers and those honored with commendations and proclamations. He announced the meeting of the Outlet Neighborhood Group on Thursday, July 11th at 6:30 pm at St Marks Lutheran Church, located at North 10th and Windsor Streets.

Council President Acosta announced that there are two meetings regarding the rehabilitation of the Penn Street Bridge. He announced the upcoming meeting schedule for City Boards.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk